

Empowerment has taken up with Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) for providing barrier free facilities to the persons with disabilities in the monumental structures and historical/heritage sites.

The Archaeological Survey of India has decided that all important centrally protected monuments should be provided with a separate path-way at the entrance gate to facilitate persons with disabilities for their entry by a wheel-chair, wherever feasible. Wooden ramps will also be provided with convenient slope. In addition to the above, all the "A" category monuments, i.e. monuments listed on the World Heritage list, should also be equipped with specially designed toilet approachable by a wheel-chair. Directions to provide above facilities to the persons with disabilities in the important centrally protected monuments in addition to all the 16 World Heritage Monuments has already been issued by the Archaeological Survey of India.

Study on Social and Financial Problems of Senior Citizens

*324. SHRI KHAGEN DAS: Will the Minister of SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT be pleased to state:

- (a) the total number of senior citizens in the country;
- (b) whether Government have carried out any study about the financial and social problems faced by them; and
- (c) if so, the steps taken by Government to give relief to them?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT (SHRIMATI MANEKA GANDHI): (a) As per the 1991 Census the number of Senior Citizens aged 60+ in the country is 56,681,640. The population projections for 1996-2016 made by the Technical Group on Population Projections (1996) indicate that the 100 million mark is expected to be reached in 2013.

(b) and (c) Yes, Sir. The Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment commissioned a project called OASIS (An acronym for Old Age Social & Income Security) and nominated an eight member Expert Committee headed by Dr. S.A. Dave, former Chairman of UTI, to examine policy questions connected with old

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age income security in India. The Committee has submitted its report to the Government on 11.1.2000. The Government is considering the recommendations of the Committee and no final decision has been taken on it. However, this Ministry has been implementing schemes to provide relief through voluntary organizations for setting old age homes, day care centers, mobile medical units etc.

Special Satellite Channel for NER

***325. SHRI W. ANGOU SINGH:** Will the Minister of INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING be pleased to state:

(a) how far the special satellite channel for the North-East inaugurated on December 27, 2000, at Guwahati can cover the North-East region;

(b) what arrangements have been made for the viewers to cover the different scheduled and major Indian languages spoken in this region;

(c) whether the Cable Television Regulation Act, 1998 has been extended to this region; and

(d) the details of the high power transmitters equipped in each State Capital of the region?

THE MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (SHRIMATI SUSHMA SWARAJ): (a) Being a satellite channel, the North-East Channel can be viewed all over the country including the North-Eastern Region, via dish antennae or cable networks.

(b) Prasar Bharti has informed that in addition to programmes in Hindi and English, programmes are telecast in nine different languages/dialects, out of which Assamese, Manipuri and Bengali are major Indian languages in the region.

(c) The Cable Television Network (Regulation) Act, 1995 is applicable to the entire country, including the North-Eastern region.

(d) While Guwahati and Agartala have High Power Transmitters for both DD-1 and DD-2, all the other state capitals in